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MBFR: PERSPECTIVES ON VERIFICATION

- This paper points out that, although the Western allies have not developed a comprehensive verification proposal for MBFR, the thrust of the current Western approach (to limit Soviet tanks and manpower) will be difficult to verify if agreement were reached.

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From the monitoring viewpoint, what will be required is a system for on-site inspection - to which both Soviets and West Germans currently object.

- As is the case in SALT, intelligence in monitoring MBFR will look for violations of the agreement; policy makers will decide if violations have in fact occurred. Thus, the verifiability of any MBFR treaty will be directly related to the treaty provisions (language) regarding inspection.

- NOTE: there is a useful graphic at the end of the text which illustrates the monitoring problem: where detectability would be high, and where low. Para III (pages 4-8) contains an interesting discussion of the problem of detectability and confidence in monitoring. Page 10 describes the situation regarding the sharing of US intelligence with NATO allies, an important consideration when public confidence in an MBFR agreement is considered.

JUDGMENT:

Confidence in an MBFR agreement will be increased if on-site inspection is negotiated. The current thrust of the Western allies approach does not facilitate the conclusion of such a desiderata.

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PERSPECTIVES ON MBFR VERIFICATION

Introduction

I. Verification has not been a central issue in the MBFR negotiations. This is partly because we have not yet come close to any agreement with the East on reductions, but also because the Western Allies have not been able to develop a comprehensive verification proposal.

A. The subject of MBFR has been studied extensively, however, and several points have emerged.

1. One is that an MBFR agreement along the lines proposed by the West in Vienna--that is, one limiting Soviet manpower and tanks--would be difficult to verify. [redacted]

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2. A second point is that our confidence in an MBFR agreement will be higher if the agreement includes measures to facilitate force monitoring and inhibit military activities.
 - a. But, the USSR has so far taken the position that an MBFR agreement could be adequately verified using only national means. This is consistent with a traditional Soviet prejudice against on-site inspection or other aids to verification.
 - b. It is also noteworthy that the West German government does not support any measures that would permit Soviet inspectors on its territory.

Verification as a Process

- II. Our SALT experience teaches us that MBFR verification would have two basic steps:

- A. The first is to monitor Warsaw Pact military forces so as to spot activities that might reflect a violation. This is the job of Intelligence.
- B. The second step is for policy-level officers to determine whether or not the questionable activities reported by Intelligence are sufficient basis to accuse the other side of a treaty violation.
- C. The difference between these steps is not trivial. If we have a photograph of a prohibited piece of equipment in a proscribed area, the conclusion is simple. But, in MBFR, questionable phenomena are likely to be more ambiguous and less clearly violations.
 - 1. It might be very difficult, for example, to demonstrate that the Soviets had brought 10,000 more men into the reductions area than they took out in one of their semiannual rotations of conscripts, which involve the exchange of some 125,000 men.
- D. The political judgments on such questions must be informed by the language of the agree-

ment and by the negotiated understandings that lie behind the treaty clauses--the negotiating history. In other words, the verifiability of an MBFR treaty will be directly related to the treaty language.

Force Monitoring--Detectability and Confidence

III. Confidence in monitoring results is a function of detectability--the more easily detectable a potential violation, the greater the confidence that a given level of monitoring activities will discern it.

A. Let me first discuss the problem of detectability:

1. Fixed activities are easier to detect than mobile ones. A missile silo is easier to spot than a tank regiment.
2. Large activities are easier to monitor than small ones. Thus airfields are easier to find than helicopter pads.
3. A unique activity is easier to identify than a common one. Combat regiments have tell-tale equipment signatures

in contrast to military support units which tend to be nondescript.

4. The fewer the activities that must be monitored, the easier it is. Divisions can be more accurately counted than regiments, regiments than battalions.
5. The greater the variety of sources available to monitor an activity, the more easily detectable a violation.
 - a. If a clandestine source is the only means of discerning a violation, most of our intelligence assets stand idle.
 - b. A proscribed activity susceptible to compromise by a variety of sources is also a deterrent to cheating.
6. The more an MBFR treaty limits elements or activities that are small, easily hidden, mobile, permitted in large numbers or lacking in uniquely identifiable characteristics, the longer a violation of the treaty is likely to go undetected.

a. To the degree that limited elements are relatively few, fixed, unique, and difficult to hide from a variety of sources, the sooner violations will be caught.

B. Second is the matter of confidence:

1. Detection of a potential violation means little if the violation cannot be documented with high confidence. The confidence factor is directly reflected in the ability of policymakers to decide a response to the violation and clearly demonstrate the violation to the Soviets and/or the public.
2. The Western MBFR proposal calls for the Soviets to withdraw a tank army consisting of 5 divisions, 68,000 men, and 1,700 tanks. We probably could verify the removal of the tank army but afterward we might have difficulty giving assurance that the Soviets are adhering to their reduced manpower and tank ceilings.

- a. The history of the MBFR negotiations is a good illustration of the problem. The Eastern negotiators have consistently argued that Western figures on Eastern manpower are too high.
 - i. Of course, they use this argument to reject Western claims that the East should reduce more than the West because of the present disparity in the East's favor.
 - ii. Their tabled figures for Eastern manpower are 160,000 under NATO's estimate.
- b. We do not believe the Eastern figures. There is good evidence that their negotiating tactics call for leaving out some categories of forces from their count.
 - i. Nevertheless, the West has not yet been able to demonstrate conclusively just where the Eastern figures are wrong.
 - ii. Nor can we be certain that our estimates do not contain some sub-

stantial errors--although almost certainly not of the magnitude claimed by the East.

3. Another factor to keep in mind is that our confidence levels in our current estimates are the accumulated product of many years of intelligence effort.
 - a. We have improved them considerably since the beginning of the MBFR negotiations.
 - b. But monitoring an MBFR agreement would require us to react quickly, thus with perhaps lower confidence in detection of possible violations.

On-Site Inspection and Confidence Building Measures

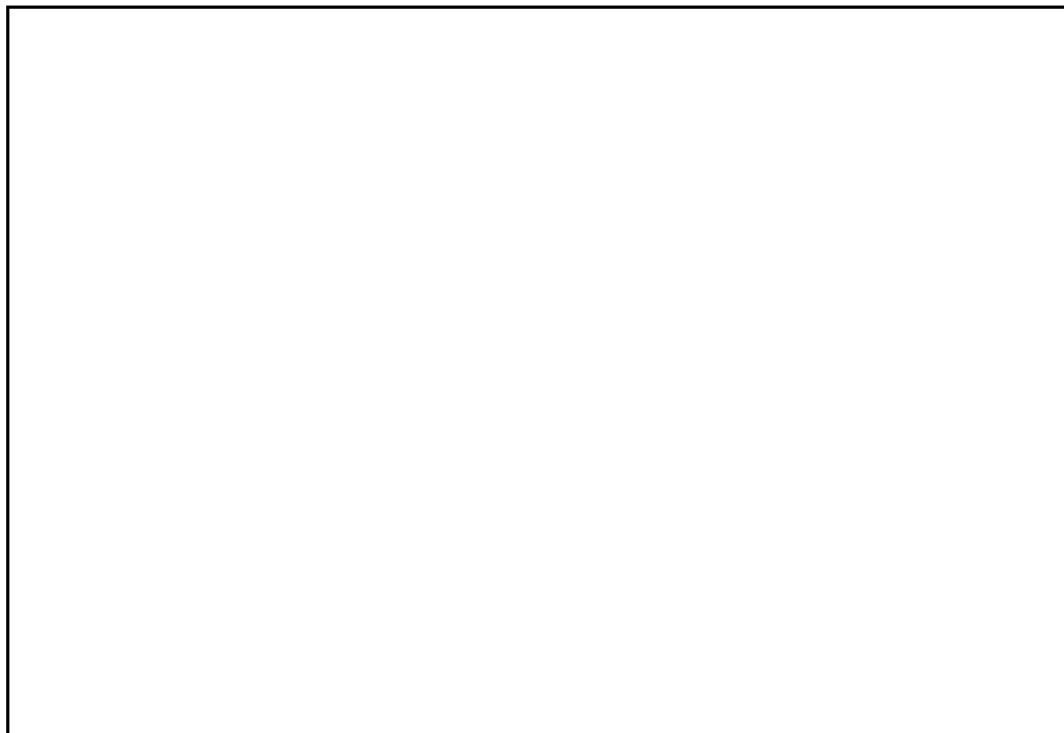
- IV. One way to increase confidence in an MBFR agreement is to negotiate on-site inspection and other measures to enhance monitoring and provide warning.
 - A. On-site inspection by ground or aerial observers could help deter violations and provide earlier indications of illegal buildup.
 - B. Confidence-building measures such as prohibition of military exercises near national frontiers

and prior notification of major military movements would also help.

1. None of the measures we have studied would be much help in monitoring manpower or equipment ceilings, however.
2. But the East has argued that such measures are not needed. They have asserted that national means will be adequate for verification.
3. Also, the West Germans have rejected on-site inspection by ground observers and have shown little interest in aerial inspection.
 - a. They do not want Soviet inspectors intruding in their territory and are skeptical of any such measures that would apply to West German territory but not to the USSR.
 - b. Much further work will be needed to develop a NATO negotiating proposal for such measures.

Sharing US Intelligence With NATO Allies

V. Verification will concern all the NATO Allies, especially the seven countries whose forces or territories are directly involved. (US, UK, Canada, FRG, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Netherlands.)



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D. If an MBFR agreement is reached, the US will need to find ways to assure all the affected Allies of access to the results of US monitoring.

VI. None of these problems constitutes an argument against striving for an MBFR agreement. They do

suggest, however, that building official and public confidence in an MBFR agreement will be an important task that should be kept in mind both in the negotiations and in our internal deliberations.

DETECTABILITY

HIGH

Fixed

Large

Unique

Few

**Multi-
Source**

LOW

● **Mobile**

● **Small**

● **Common**

● **Many**

● **Single
Source**